The Reformed Journal

MARCH 1960
One Hundredth Issue

Retrospect and Prospect

This is the one hundredth issue of the Reformed Journal. In March 1951, now nine years ago, the first copies were entrusted to the mails and commended to the attention of the public. Since then the Journal has appeared eleven times a year, steadily upborne by the unfailing mercies of the Lord and the sustained interest of growing numbers in the Reformed community. In this Open Letter the editors and publisher wish to commemorate this fact and to make sincere acknowledgement of their indebtedness to the many by whose aid and sufferance the Journal has been able to reach this milestone in its continuing career.

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Thanks are due first of all to God who, in spite of our frequent failings, has not withheld his blessings. Thanks are due then to our faithful readers whose charitable reception of the Journal's offerings has made the task of publishing easy and delightful. Thanks are due finally to the many contributors of articles who, supplementing the work of the editors, have lent variety and substance to the Journal. To God, and to our readers and contributors, we express our heartfelt gratitude.

As now we look forward to the publication of the next one hundred issues, we do so within the perspective laid down when the Journal first appeared, and with the intent that governed us then.

With life and thought founded upon the Scriptures and disciplined by the Reformed tradition, we shall try, in the coming months as in the past, to apprehend and articulate, in and with the Church, the Mind of Christ, her Lord.

Continued on page three

1960 - Our Fiftieth Year

Probably the most important of the translated works of Berkouwer . . .

Divine Election

by

G. C. BERKOUWER

Translated by Hugo Bekker from the Dutch edition *De Verkiezing Gods*

"G. C. Berkouwer's *Divine Election* is a discussion of election in a perspective and spirit that will be quite novel to most theologians and ministers. Berkouwer contends that election can be understood only within faith, and within a spirit of doxology, for election takes place *'in* Christ.' Hence election must be understood and employed in terms of the gospel. He then repudiates theological usage which employs election and reprobation as a principle of interpretation for theology with the usual consequence of deducing from this truth a nice logical system of theology. Another powerful feature of this book is its criticism of the conception of the sovereignty of God which abstracts it from the whole truth about God and then makes it into a mere principle of naked, 'absolute power,' an ethically neutral principle of brute force."

— Dr. James Daane

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Because Christ is Lord and Savior, we shall both press his imperious claims upon the world and openly declare his redemptive love to fallen man.

Because the Bible is the authoritative record of God's self-disclosure and the infallible rule of faith and life, we shall search it diligently for a knowledge of the truth and defend it vigorously against all faithless attacks.

Because we possess in the Reformed tradition a vital and precious heritage, we shall orient ourselves to it and endeavor to make it both more meaningful to ourselves and more relevant to the problems and concerns of our generation.

Because we are members of the Church of Christ, a fellowship of faith and love, we shall try to avoid in all our writing whatever moves in a narrow spirit to a narrow end, and shun whatever fails to serve the broader interests of our common life.

Because the party-spirit rends and tears the wholeness of Christ's body, we shall eschew all spurious formations and continue to deplore every attempt to establish rival and organized schools of thought within the circle of the Church.

Because we belong to the Universal Church, the family of God in all the earth, we shall try to escape all narrow provincialisms and every sectarian bias.

Because it is only by searching, in reliance upon the Spirit and the Word, that Christians can discern what is the good and acceptable will of God, we shall be reluctant to adopt ready-made and simplistic answers to the large questions which press upon us in our complex and crisis-ridden age.

Because the pace of human life has never been so swift as now, we shall exert ourselves to keep abreast of the times, and exercise that wholesome openness to current advances which is possible only to those who are enclosed in Christ.

Because we are wholly dependent upon the Lord, we shall cast ourselves upon his care, and leave the issue of our striving in his hands.

A Lenten Thought

by Lester DeKoster

WHO SEETH IN SECRET . . .

CHARLES BAXTER was (or should I say, *is*) a carpenter.

I met him in David Grayson's *Adventures in Contentment.*

He is still there. I — and you — can meet him any time, changed only because we have been changed by passing years. Otherwise, that same Baxter — endowed with that delightful kind of immortality that authors of books are permitted to give.

Baxter has (shall we treat him as alive, here and now) a carpenter shop. In it he makes tables, chairs, and whatever else wood is amenable to becoming at skilled hands.

One day Baxter was hard at work on the *under*-side of a small table. We — that is, Grayson and you and I — dropped in to chat. We stayed to watch. Long after that *under*-side was finished (we thought), Baxter continued to bend over it, sanding a bit here, shaving a little there. Finally we asked (not for the first time, but because we liked to hear his answer), "Charles, why bother so much with the *under*-side — who will know the difference?"

"I will," he said; and went on sanding.

I suppose that in those words lies the difference between the craftsman and the workman, between work and drudgery, or, if you like, between artistry and manufacture.

ONCE THIS Charles Baxter has gotten under your skin a little, he is hard to forget. There is much else in those *Adventures* of David Grayson's (who was really Ray S. Baker, the biographer of Woodrow Wilson) that lingers long after the book is laid away. I don't find that title on the usual lists of the world's "great books"; but I don't care; it is none-the-less near the top of mine.

It *is* a temptation, isn't it: Who cares? or, Who will know the diff? or, What of it? or, What's it all worth, anyway?

George Orwell had something of the same idea, *in reverse.* His prophetic novel, "1984," has the dictator Big Brother watching, or trying to watch, everything.

Who will know the diff? Big Brother will, if electronic devices and invisible rays can penetrate the walls of our homes and of our thoughts.

When a society cannot take enough Charles Baxters for granted, then that society is ripe for Big Brothers. It's the old story: those who will not discipline themselves, must be disciplined by others.

ORWELL PROBABLY never heard of Charles Baxter. I suppose he may have gotten his awesome conception of someone who watches every movement and knows every thought (or tries to) from the Biblical text that heads this piece.

Charles Baxter might have added to his "I will," the equally true, "God will." And a theologian might rather easily show that the "I will" is man's response to the "God will" — a kind of Part Three of the Heidelberg Catechism responding to Parts One and Two.

We use the idea of God's seeing our every act knowing our every thought, judging our every inclination, as a *disciplinary* idea. So it is! Perhaps we think of it more in the training of our children than we do in the training of ourselves. Too bad if so. The young might need the admonition less from our *mouths* if we exhibited our consciousness of it more with our *lives.* Thirty years or so ago my school principal allowed me to read an essay I had written for him to a group of local businessmen. The essay advocated exacting public regulation of business ethics. The discussion period was opened by a man who said, a little pompously I think, "Now, young man, we all operate our businesses strictly by the Golden Rule and the Ten Commandments!"

I was taken aback, but managed to say, "Do you *really?*"

The naive question stopped him. I shall always remember the long silence, and then the burst of laughter that ensued.

I know now why they laughed. What else, but weep or pray? When innocence asks, "Do you *really?*" have you the courage to bluff it out?

If that gentleman had said, "We *try* to run our businesses . . ." (and to God be the rest) my first introduction to the "real world" might have been delayed a few years longer. But they *knew,* and they all knew that God *knew* — and a child's inquiry reminded them of both.

Who knows? God knows. "He that seeth in secret. . . ." No place so hidden or so far, neither in light of day nor by dark of night, neither wor

of hand, passion of heart, nor thought of mind . . . nay, no-thing, no-where, that is unseen. And there is no escape; neither on wings of morning nor in lowermost parts of earth, neither in life nor in death is the relation severed — God and man, *He* and *we*.

It *is* a disciplinary thought! Not only for children!

BUT IT IS ALSO, and much more, a liberating fact, an exhilarating truth, a blessed assurance!

All of the thousand nameless, countless, inescapable things that make a day and a month and a year: *who cares?* HE does!

Is there light in the gloom of drudgery? He *sees!*

Does duty matter *even* when it meets dusty furniture, lint on rugs, sand in shoes, endless dirty clothes and dirty dishes? Who knows? *He* knows! Who cares? *He* cares! Who counts the hidden, the uncounted, the countless acts that move yesterday into tomorrow? *He* does!

In din or in silence. The last as well as the first. The minutest scratch, the pull of the lever, the page unread, the problem unsolved, the smile unsmiled, the soft word spoken. All of these, and all of everything! In strength or in weariness. In patience or impatience. Alone or in the crowd. Who will take note? He will! Who can possibly share? He does! Who will not forget? Still *He*! Is the repetition endless? From first to last, He sees! What does *this* matter? To Him *all* things matter — and He sees!

If He missed the "little" things (careful what you call "little" — do you mean things like a cup of cold water?), how could you conceive of His noting the "big" things? At what point would He break in?

No, 'tis not so.

The answer is always the same: who sees? He does!

Sees even *this?* Yes, even *this!* And if we would do *this* in His fear, in love, in hope, in singing, then let us remember it: "He seeth in secret. . . ."

There can be no "What of it?" or "What's the use anyway?" when we are aware of the eye of love ever upon us.

SHALL REWARD THEE OPENLY

DO YOU THINK of money?

Rewards often are.

But there are things money can't buy.

God's rewards are likely, then, to be more than or other than only financial; and they may not be financial at all.

Our Lord did not define the "reward."

But do you think that it is implied by the truth upon which it rests? God "sees." Might not His reward be the gift to us of "seeing" eyes?

To see, first of all, that *He sees.*

It is a gift, is it not (a most rare, precious, and wonderful gift) to be blessed with seeing that the loving eye of God is on us for good every hour! We did not suppose, did we, that we won such an exhilarating consciousness for ourselves? We sing of His watching sparrows, and infer that He must then also watch us. How true! But between that singing, and the rich living-into-and-out-of this blessed truth — *there* lies the *gift!* He to whom it has been given to see deep within his soul what it *means* that God sees him every hour, in every deed — and that thus every deed may be hallowed to His service — hath such a one not been rewarded with a pearl for which one would sell all, if he could?

Is it not a reward of inestimable worth to see all of the drudgeries, of the monotonies, the unappreciated and unnoticed tasks of which so many hours are made — to see all of these, each one by one, illumined, transformed, made deeds of worship, because He *sees* them all?

And all this reward not only, but more.

Consider that nothing which we have is really *ours* until we come to *appreciate* it. Are we not somehow aliens to the world, to ourselves, to those whose love we share until that contemplation, that enjoyment, that thrill of communion called "appreciation" puts us at one with all we possess and who possess us? Call this seeing, or call it sight, or insight: is it not the *gift* of God, the reward of God? How this gift distinguishes him who *enjoys* the good, green fields from him who owns (*only* owns) them. The joy is eternal, the ownership temporal. And man may have *both* possession and enjoyment, when he is given to see; but lacking possession need be no bar to enjoying, to him who sees.

AND THE REWARD is open, too! As our Master said.

Open to those who have eyes to see.

Think of those you know who have this knowledge — and this kind of knowledge is the measure of all "knowledges" — that their Lord sees them, with love, in all they do. Are we not enriched by their open display of this consciousness, which *is* their reward? We went, say, to comfort; and came away comforted! We went in gloom, and came away in glowing day! We went to find fault, and stayed to support. We went expecting deceit, and were

confronted by authenticity. We went with hands clasped behind our backs, and left with the warm clasp of friendship and accord.

The reward, in them who have it, is open — if we, too, have been given eyes to see.

WE ARE suspicious, are we not, of those who exalt "heart" over "head" in matters religious; and the suspicion is just enough, for heart and head should not be drawn asunder. But blessed and joyous are we at this Easter time and always if our hearts are warmed, and our heads are suffused by that warmth, in the glad knowledge that our Father *sees* our secret ways, our al-ways, with an eye to rewarding us openly. And our receiving the reward will be in the sharing of it. Pleasure made joy, community made communion, and darkness shattered by light!

Ecumenicity and the Mission Field

by Harry R. Boer

THERE has come into being the past half century a new standard for measuring the integrity of the Church. Until about 1900 there was only one standard for measuring the integrity of the Church. It was: orthodoxy, faithfulness to the creed, loyalty to accepted teaching. Where this obtains, there, we said, the true Church is found.

This standard the world Church by and large no longer considers adequate. When I say that the Church no longer considers it adequate I do not mean to say that it does not regard it as a valid standard to apply. The old standard has not been rejected. It has been qualified by the adducing of another standard — not a competing one but a complementing one. This second standard is *the unity of the Church.* The Church has come to the discovery that the unity of the Church is *as much* a part of the true doctrine as any other teaching is.

In 1953 I attended an international mission conference at the Ecumenical Institute (Study Center of the World Council of Churches) in Bossey, Switzerland. The meetings were under the leadership of Dr. Hendrik Kraemer. Anyone who thinks that these meetings were all mouthings of ecumenical agreement is quite mistaken. This came poignantly but also very usefully to expression in a spirited exchange which I heard in one of the seminars between a Lutheran missionary and Dr. Kraemer. "If I have to choose between unity and truth," said the missionary, "I will choose the truth every time." To which Dr. Kraemer replied, "You cannot choose between unity and truth. Unity is a part of the truth that you confess when you say, 'I believe a holy catholic Church.' If you want to pursue the truth you *must* find a place in it for the teaching of the unity of the Church."

All I have learned through study and experience since then has served to underscore the truth of this answer. I have become convinced that to ignore it is to resist the promptings of God's Spirit in this era of the Church's history.

There is going on today in the world Church a wonderful movement of the Spirit of God which is bringing about a belated recognition in the Church everywhere of the clear and unambiguous teaching of the Bible that the Church according to her nature is *one* — one not simply spiritually but also visibly. We have come to see that a spiritual unity which makes it impossible for a minister to administer communion to believers of another denomination, or for them to receive it from him, or the refusal on the part of one denomination to recognize the ministry of another, is not a very spiritual unity. In fact, it is a severing of the spiritual unity, for spiritual unity, if it means anything at all, means *fellowship,* fellowship not merely between individual believers in a concentration camp, or in the army, or as castaways on an island, or as neighbors in a secular community, but fellowship *in the Church* and *between the churches.*

The unity of which we speak is not simply the unity of believers. It is the unity *of the Church.* The people who say that the unity of the Church comes to sufficient expression in the spiritual unity that exists among believers transfer the reference of the unity, probably without realizing it, from the article of the Creed which confesses, "I believe a holy catholic Church" to the article which reads "the communion of saints." The unity of the Church refers only secondarily to the communion of believers. Its reference is to the corporate, bodily, outward, visible unity as well as to the spiritual, inward, invisible unity of the Church of Christ. To the extent that the body of Christ is not visibly one, to that extent it is not spiritually one. This teaching, this truth, this emphasis on a too long

ignored doctrine of the New Testament is the great gift of God's Spirit to the Church of the twentieth century. Let us beware of dismissing it lightly as "ecumenism" or "modernism" lest we be found to be fighting against God.

THE movement that has incorporated this new emphasis is broadly called the ecumenical movement. This movement includes, but is far wider than, the World Council of Churches. It is in the first place an attitude, a spirit, an understanding. These have by no means found organizational expression everywhere. They come to expression in a movement of the spirit, in a universal groping to recover lost unity, to heal what has been broken, to bring together again those who have become estranged from each other. The movement is not without its problems and difficulties, and not least among these are the problems posed by doctrinal differences. Of one thing, however, we may be sure, that as surely as Mt. Everest towers above the Himalayas, and as surely as the sun pursues its course from east to west, so surely will doctrinal consideration *alone* (within the basic framework of God's reconciliation of the world to himself through Christ) cease to govern the resolution of the problem of the separation of the churches. The demands posed by the Scriptural teaching concerning the unity of the Church have become an indestructible and unremovable part of the discourse that is going on.

The divine irony of this development is that it did not arise out of the profound insights of the theologians but from the simplicities of the mission field. It is the mission field of modern times that has recovered for us the teachings of the greatest missionary of all — the apostle Paul. One of the biggest mistakes which the Church has made in the history of her reflection on Scripture has been to regard Paul as a theologian rather than as a missionary. What he wrote was written in the existential context of a missionary situation. A popular and highly useful translation of the letters of Paul has a title that might well have been formulated in heaven itself: *Letters to Young Churches.* We have often treated Paul's letters as though great theologian A were writing to great theologian B, and that in a quite impersonal manner. But that is not the way it was. He wrote to simple members of simple churches about the profound simplicities of the gospel.

Now in these letters Paul does not *teach* that the Church is one. He *assumes* the obvious. As a result of our history of theological controversy we have to be re-taught what the early Church never even had to learn. In Paul's letters the *assumption* of the unity of the Church is itself the teaching and the irresistible power of the teaching. To this assumption the Church today is trying to get back.

MISSIONARIES and the younger churches do not arrive at the idea of the unity of the Church by a lot of deep reflection. On the mission field the ecclesiastical divisions of the West are understandable only as historical developments. But as realities not allowed by the New Testament and not relevant in a missionary situation, these divisions are not understandable, least of all to Christians who, while they understand quite well the gospel, have little or no comprehension of our history. When African leaders say that they do not understand our divisions they do not mean to say that our theological distinctions and differences are meaningless and without value. I repeat, they do *not* say this. They say that they are not able to see *why* these differences should stand in the way of the visible unity of the Church of Christ in Africa, which has not had the painful theological battles that have created the scandalous division of the Church in the West.

Now all of this has direct bearing on a subject that was a great bone of contention in the Christian Reformed Church until June 1959, and of which nothing more has been heard since that time. I refer to the debate about the participation of the Christian Reformed Church in the Theological College of Northern Nigeria (TCNN). The current silence in the Christian Reformed Church finds as little reflection on this mission field as did the frantic debate before the silence set in. TCNN goes steadily on its way and has been rewarded by our having been privileged to bring to a close the first year of the school's life in early December. On February 8 the second school year began.

TCNN is not a Reformed school; it is not a Lutheran school, nor an Anglican or a Baptist school. And yet it is all of these. It is a school whose constituency is determined that the unity felt among the churches and among the missions that support it shall not be thwarted by the divisions of the West. It is a school that grows out of the belief that the unity of the churches (and therefore of this their school) is wholly compatible with the divergencies in doctrinal belief which the founding missions — and to an extent the daughter churches — hold. That is to say, the constituency of this school believes that the visible unity of the Church is an inalienable, inseparable, and essential mark of the Church and must come to expression in this land of overwhelming paganism and Mohammedanism.

Creation and/or Evolution

by J. K. van Baalen

Definition of Terms

ETYMOLOGICALLY the word evolution means "unfolding," unrolling." That the mere use of the term evolution calls forth a mass of confused thought is, in no small degree, due to the fact that the word is used by various individuals with widely divergent connotations. Some use it as a synonym for *growth* ("The Evolution of the Human Embryo in the Uterus"), others as a synonym of *development* ("The Evolution of the Mind").

In the fields of philosophy, theology, and science many make use of the word evolution as denoting *the opposite of creation.* Where this is done, belief in evolution must lead either to complete atheism or to stark agnosticism. The latter was the case with Charles Darwin, who gradually but completely lost his long-time historical faith (B. B. Warfield, "Charles Darwin's Religious Life: Sketch in Spiritual Biography." *Studies in Theology,* pp. 541-582). It is to be understood from the outset that when the term evolution is used in the sense of *absolute origin,* "such a view can never secure a place in the realm of pure science. The problem of ultimate origin is not one that science can solve. If it is solved at all, it must be by purely philosophical as distinguished from scientific or scientific-philosophical methods. Evolution, therefore, must be viewed in science purely and strictly as a process of orderly change in the form of things" (Andrew C. Zenos, "Evolution," in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*).

By *creation,* then, is meant in this article *the bringing forth of matter by an act of omnipotent divine will where there was no previous matter existing, or the calling into existence of spirits that were not there before.* By *evolution* is meant *the gradual development into its final form of the already created material.*

Evolution and Genesis

When the word evolution is thus defined and confined, it becomes clear at once that there can be no contradiction between the account in Genesis 1 and 2, and some theory of evolution. According to Gensis 1 God said, "Let the earth put forth grass, herbs yielding seed, and fruit trees." Regardless of how long or short a period it took the earth to do this, this is evolution, or divine "creation" by means of evolution. We further read, "And God said, Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind, cattle, and creeping things, and beasts of the earth after their kind: and it was so." Again, this is divine "creation" through a process of evolution, regardless of the time element. God *made appear* entirely new and different things out of already existing *created* material.

Finally, Genesis 2:7 reads, "And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." Here two separate actions are described: the first was creation by evolution; the second, an immediate creative act, i.e., absolute creation, the latter word used in its full sense. It deserves attention that God made man's body out of already created matter, and that *nothing* is said concerning the manner in which He did this.

But what of the words "after their kind" and "after its kind," which occur seven times in Genesis 1? Some have thought that these words are sufficient to sound the death knell to all that smacks of evolution. If we accept their verdict, however, we meet with insurmountable difficulties. Known to scientists today are about 15,000 species of birds, and 800,000 species of insects, etc. Does this mean that 1,600,000 insects went into Noah's ark, or, in all, 2,500,000 "species" of all "living things"? Were there Pekingese, and Doberman pinschers, and bulldogs and all the other canine friends of man in the ark? Did Noah eat grapefruit for breakfast while in the ark? The question answers itself: "evolution" has been going on for centuries and is still continuing by means of crossing, interbreeding, climatic changes, etc.

We must, then, within the wide range of possibilities, distinguish between all sorts of meanings of the word evolution. Most scholars differentiate between "cosmic evolution," i.e., autonomous origin of the universe without a First and Personal Cause (to be rejected without reservation), and "organic evolution" or development within the species or even from one species into another by the word and power of God (to be accepted with restrictions).

An Experience and What It Taught

One of the first questions that meet the eye even in the most cursory contemplation of evolution is, of course, that of the length of the "days of creation." A second problem is: If these days were long periods, what happened during them? Did one species more or less slowly develop out of another? And a third question is: Did the living species them-

selves (organisms) develop out of lifeless or anorganic forms of existence?

As to the first question, it is now close to half a century ago that the present writer successfully passed the "preparatory" examination by the May, 1914, Classis of Zwolle of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. At the end of the exam in Dogmatics by the Rev. G. Elzenga an opportunity for asking questions was given. Only one delegate, and he an elder, had two questions. First, he wanted to know "what the candidate thinks of periods or ordinary days for the creation account in Genesis 1."

My answer was: "As to that I have not even a tentative opinion. And I think that as long as theologians of the stature of Dr. Kuyper and Dr. Bavinck are still debating the question, it would be wrong to expect an opinion on the part of a candidate with a mere four and one half years of theological studies behind him."

There were no further questions concerning this matter. Among the delegates to the Classis, however, was the well-known theologian J. H. Hania, pupil and friend of Abraham Kuyper, and the man who had edited several of the latter's *Dictaten Dogmatiek.* At the close of the examination this Dr. Hania approached the candidate with this remark, "Mr. Van Baalen, I wish to congratulate you not only upon a good examination, but especially upon your answer to the question on the days of creation. You see, you are very young [twenty-four, I was] and a beginner. You cannot be expected to know everything. But a spirit of modesty is essential at once to true Christianity and to genuine scholarship."

These words I have not been able to forget. Even today, in spite of two additional years of postgraduate studies and a lifetime of reading, and owing to a busy life in the pastorate with its manifold time-consuming occupations, I have not been able to come to a definite conclusion as to the full import of Genesis 1 and 2. What little time I have been able to wrest from the days spent in work for congregations, Classes, and Synods, I have mostly expended in other fields of research. Repeatedly, however, I have been irked when ministers with a three-year theological training in Calvin Seminary tried to force candidates to the ministry to admit that Genesis 1 allows only of twenty-four-hour days of creation.

The Bible says *six days,* to be sure. But it states at the same time that during the first three of these "days" there was no sun, which today determines the length of a twenty-four-hour day in most parts of the globe. Also, it does not mention whether these supposed sun-determined days are to be computed at the equator or at the poles. Neither does it say that the seventh day, upon which God "rested from all his work which he had made" (Gen. 2:2), was a day of twenty-four hours.

As a sample of bias in exegesis, I mention here that I have heard it said in all seriousness that "since the second triad of days was undoubtedly composed of days of twenty-four hours duration each, because determined by sunrise and sunset, the first three days must have been days of twenty-four hours also." Would it not be more correct to start at the beginning, and to say that since the first three days are not to be measured by a non-existing sun, we receive a hint at the outset not to measure the days of creation by our time clock? And that we do not even know how the sun acted toward an as yet unfinished earth during the second three days?

Moreover, the expression "the day of the Lord" in various places in the Old Testament comprises the entire period from the first to the second advent of Christ, to which it may be added that in John 11:9 we read, "Are there not twelve hours [*horai*] in the day?" In I John 2:19, "It is the last hour [*hora*]," an "hour" that has already lasted upward of nineteen centuries. Both "day" and "hour" therefore may have widely divergent meanings.

Neither are the terms "evening" and "morning" to determine the length of the days of creation, but rather we must know what is meant by "day" before we can define "morning" and "evening" of such a day.

Evangelical and Orthodox Scholars

It is impossible to separate the three above-named problems concerning evolution. Those who believe in long periods for the creation days are generally convinced also that gradually the species as we know them originated during and after these periods. One must write about evolution in general in a brief article such as the present without solving the problem of "Creation and/or Evolution" peremptorily. I wish to quote a few scholars of undoubted orthodoxy who held that evolution and creation are both taught by God's twofold revelation in Nature and Scripture, and that they must stand together. The names of these men are selected almost at random, and the quotations are herewith appended in chronological order.

First, and foremost, then, was the valiant Swiss, F. Bettex, who in the writer's college days gained scores of intellectuals for the evangelical faith. Among his books, some of which were translated into eighteen languages, is one entitled *The Bible God's Word.* In this volume he went so far as to assert that the original revelation of the Old and New Testaments, being of divine origin, was so

far beyond human language that even various translations may well have been divinely inspired. Few, if any, of us would go that far. But this Bible-defending Bettex was pre-eminently a scientist, and he wrote on the geological periods of creation, and related evolutionary matters (*The First Page of the Bible,* and numerous other works). All of this, he held, was in harmony with "the venerable Moses."

Among the theologians of indisputable Reformed reputation we meet first with the American William G. T. Shedd, who in 1888 wrote: "The doctrine of an immense time, prior to the six creative days, was a common view among the fathers and schoolmen. So also was the doctrine of the rarefied and chaotic nature of matter in its first form, a patristic tenet. . . . Respecting the length of the six creative days, speaking generally for there was some difference of views, the patristic and medieval exegesis makes them to be long periods, not days of twenty-four hours. The latter interpretation has prevailed only in the modern church. Augustine teaches that the length of the six days is not to be determined by our week-days" (*Dogmatic Theology* I, 447).

James Orr of Edinburgh wrote in 1891: "Science compels us to go back to a beginning in time. No doctrine comes here more powerfully to our support than the doctrine of evolution which some suppose to be a denial of creation." And: "The agreement of Scripture and science up to this point is patent and incontestable. In the original picture in Genesis we have, as in nature, a gradually ascending series of creations. We have a man at the top of the scale; man as the latest being of all, and distinguished from all by the fact that he alone bears the Creator's image; man set at the head of the lower order of creatures, as God's vicegerent and representative. Science corroborates all this" (*The Christian View of God and the World,* pp. 127, 134).

The Dutch theologian, Herman Bavinck, shortly before his death in 1921, ordered some of his essays bundled. These were posthumously published. In this book *Verzamelde Opstellen* is a chapter on "Evolutie," in which we read as follows:

"The relationship between faith and science will improve if the latter will abandon the mechanistic view of the world and the enmity against religion, especially the Christian religion, and if the former will more than hitherto acknowledge the important element of truth that undoubtedly is contained in the doctrine of evolution and descent. For surely, that there is evolution, provided we do not limit the term to mechanical motion and chemical fusion and separation, is proved by every organism that originates and perishes, and by the history of nations and of mankind. . . . Provided that evolution be not understood in a mechanical sense, there is no antithesis (*tegenstelling*) between creation and evolution" (p. 119).

Francis L. Patton of Princeton wrote in 1923: "Materialism is incompatible with Christianity, but the doctrine of evolution is not necessarily materialistic. It is quite compatible with theism." And again: "The Old Testament is not a book. It is a literature. . . . Stately, compact, embracing an epoch in a word, it records the coming of the cosmos. Using the common units as the measurement of time, it packs eons into hours, and makes a week suffice for the world-process from the condensation of the nebulae to the appearance of man upon the planet" (*Fundamental Christianity,* pp. 182, 216).

Abraham Pieters of Western Theological Seminary, Holland, Michigan, wrote in 1943: "If a Christian believer is inclined to yield as far as possible to the theory of organic evolution, he can hold that man's body was prepared by God through such a natural process, and that, when this process had reached a certain stage, God took one of the man-like brutes so produced, and made him the first human being, by endowing him with a human soul and a morally responsible nature. . . . In such a conception there is nothing contrary to the Bible" (*Notes on Genesis,* p. 45).

The Non-Orthodox on Evolution and Religion

Even from these few citations it should be crystal clear that not every Scripture-believing theologian and not all evangelical scientists must reject evolution as though any and all theories of evolution reject God as the Creator of the universe.

The latter was recently attempted once again at the Darwin Centennial Celebration at the University of Chicago. Here Sir Julian Huxley, noted biologist and grandson of Darwin's follower, ventured the assertion that "religions are destined to disappear." It is evident that this bold assertion was made from the standpoint of an atheistic, materialistic Darwinism.

What happened, according to *The Christian Century* (Dec. 9, 1959) is that "a barrage of public protest" was fired in the direction of "the architects of the Chicago celebration" that "filled them with dismay and concern." Bernard Eugene Meland, head of the Federated Theological Faculties of Chicago, in a terse article on "Huxley at Chicago"

at once set out not only to point to the "incredible naivete" of Sir Julian, but, with an appeal to the late Shailer Mathews, argued that Huxley's own biological data, far from destroying religion, point in the direction of "an evolution toward immortality" (*ibid.*).

Approximately one month later the same influential religious weekly contained a more elaborate and more documented article by Langdon B. Gilkey, professor of theology at Vanderbilt University Divinity School, Nashville, Tennessee. The burden of this article is that it is not the acceptance of scientific geological and biological *facts* that leads away from the Christian faith, but a naturalistic philosophical interpretation of these facts ("Darwin and Christian Thought," *The Christian Century,* Jan. 6, 1960).

Enough, then, to remind the reader that evolution need not lead to atheism. And not all evolutionists have abandoned faith in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

Professor Lever on Evolution

Jan Lever, professor of zoology at the noted Free University, Amsterdam, has published a book in which he not only defends the long-period "days" of creation but also a theory of *micro-evolution,* i.e., that the numerous species as we have them now have slowly evolved out of lower forms of existence by the ever present and guiding hand of God. The book has been translated by a Christian Reformed scholar who became an M. D. after finishing the course of studies at Calvin Seminary, and after having been licensed to "exhort" in the Christian Reformed churches (*Creation and Evolution* by Jan Lever. Translated from the Dutch by Peter G. Berkhout, M. S., M. D., 1958). The book in its original form has been reviewed in *The Banner* for August 9, 1957.

The present writer considers this review an unfortunate occurrence. And this for two reasons. First, because such material does not belong in a popular church weekly, and can there only lead to the sowing of suspicion and unrest. If the Synod of Dort of 1618-1619 warned ministers not to discuss the problem of infra- or supra-lapsarianism from the pulpit, "since these things go far beyond the mental grasp of the simple," I dare say that the manifold scientific and philosophic and theological problems that pertain to the study of Creation and/or Evolution far surpass the comparatively elementary problem of supra- and infra-lapsarianism in difficulty.

My second objection to the *Banner* review is of a more serious nature. The author of this review gave no reasons for his disagreement with Dr. Lever, except this one sentence at the close of his article: "In my opinion, the proposed solution of problems concerning the origin of organisms is based upon an incorrect interpretation of Scripture."

For the rest, the *Banner* article contains only a very brief outline of the various chapters in Lever's book with one or two interspersed quotations from other Dutch scientists to show that not all scientists in the Netherlands agree with Dr. Lever. All of this is prefaced with the following: "Dr. Lever shows himself to be a thorough scholar and an excellent biologist. He has read copiously and is familiar with the history of biology as well as with its recent developments, especially in the theoretical field. He is also a sincere Christian who is making a serious effort to harmonize the revelation in Scripture with his scientific concepts. Two questions naturally arise in this connotation, namely: Is his interpretation of Scriptural revelation correct, and, are his scientific concepts warranted in the light of Scriptural revelation? It is with these questions in mind that this review is written."

It is with this approach that the present writer must disagree from a theological standpoint. In the Middle Ages scholars believed so thoroughly that the Bible must be taken literally that the conviction was universal that the sun revolves around the earth. Consequently Galileo Galilei was forced in 1633 to recant his conception of the heliocentric nature of our universe. Afterward the Church believed in the inspiration of Scripture fully as much, but it dawned upon her that Scriptural speech not intended to be scientific must be interpreted in harmony with scientific facts, and the meaning of scientific facts must determine the exegesis of non-scientific Scriptural language. "From the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof" (Ps. 50:1) is not a scientifically correct expression. Yet it is not incorrect, because it is not meant to be a description in scientific terms, but merely a popular statement from the viewpoint of the observer.

The Exegesis of Genesis 1 *and* 2 *Still Unfinished*

Perhaps, therefore, the final exegesis of the first two chapters of Genesis is still incomplete. These chapters, orignially written for a million recently liberated and uneducated slaves, were not clothed in scientific language. They were intended to teach and to remind readers throughout the ages that

God made the universe in an orderly manner; that out of matter He made man's body; that out of Himself He made man's soul-life totally different from that of the animal; that there was a first man who dragged all his descendants down with him into sin and misery, but also that this man had been so created that it was possible for him to be a type of "the second man from heaven."

Concerning the manner in which this man was made as to his physical structure, Scripture says nothing at all. *A priori* it would seem exceeding strange that the Almighty should have done this in a terrific hurry. In all other works of God the mills of God have always ground slowly.

It matters not from a religious point of observation. The age of the earth, the appearance of life upon the earth, these and many other problems remain today shrouded in mystery.

Dr. G. J. Sizoo in his *De Ouderdom der Aarde* has argued that what we know today of nuclear power has demonstrated that the earth is vastly older than previous generations have imagined. If this agrees with the findings of evolutionists, it matters not for the understanding of Genesis 1 and 2 which were written with a religious orientation.

Professor Lever and the "Liberals"

Professor Lever has painstakingly rejected several theories of evolution including even "theistic evolution," which he considers to be leaning in the direction of materialistic autonomous natural development with an occasional interference by God Himself. Up to this point, no doubt, theologians and scientists of a more and of a less liberal bent of mind would agree. Yet there is one vital point of difference.

Dr. Gilkey states: "The theory of evolution can in itself be accepted by any Christian willing to question the verbal infallibility of Scripture and the specific theories of time and of species contained in it." For this the present writer would substitute: "by any Christian wiling to question whether the verbally inspired Genesis account was meant to be understood literally."

To be sure, Genesis is a historical book, not a book of parables or of apocalypse. History, however, begins with man. Genesis 1 and 2 are *prehistoric*. And even so the remainder of Genesis is not "secular" or "general" history, but history of revelation, passing by centuries while dwelling elaborately upon the life of one man. This is not the ordinary historical method of procedure.

To this view of Genesis 1 and 2 as verbally inspired, but not meant to be literally interpreted, the professor at the Free University would undoubtedly consent.

If, then, the writer understands the main thrust of Dr. Lever's book correctly (some of his scientific arguments and conclusions admittedly being beyond this mere theologian), Dr. Lever agrees with theologians of various shadings of orthodoxy and non-orthodoxy in that he holds that the *facts* of evolution do not, and cannot, affect the Christian faith except when these facts are interpreted from a preconceived infidel philosophy.

As to Dr. Lever's own particular brand of evolution as far as it concerns the origin of man, one may find it in the following words taken from the concluding chapter: "We do not mean to say that, for instance, a mother gorilla all at once gave birth to a human infant. This would be an absurdity. Man is in all his structures a unity and for that reason we should much rather suppose that within that which has been created and, specifically, within the group of higher mammals, a separate line led to man, a line in which all lower structures were directed at the unfolding of the higher structures of man. We are strengthened in this conception since, although man in as far as his bones, cells, and blood are concerned, displays a great concurrence with the higher animals, in other, namely the higher functions of lower order (see the previous chapter), he differs considerably from these animals" (p. 221).

Conclusion

These and other data must be given due consideration lest we do worse than fighting windmills. Facts are stubborn things and facts of God's method of creation cannot be denied without fighting against God. What would have become of the Church had it continued its opposition to Galilei?

In the last congregation that the writer served during the final five years of his pastorate, we lost to the Christian Reformed Church an intelligent, college-bred young couple because the husband, a student of evolution at the University of Alberta, became disgusted with a church that, in his opinion, obscured *truth,* revealed by God in nature, in the interests of *a priori* exegesis.

Let us, then, wait and see. When, in the earlier years, Christian scholars such as Bettex and Dana wrote on the geological periods of creation, Warfield in America and Van Andel in the Netherlands took to the study of geology. And these theologians held their peace.

Let us do likewise. Better yet, let us invite Professor Lever to Michigan for a series of lectures, and let us see if he is able to help us in our study of God's special revelation from the standpoint of his admittedly vast knowledge of God's revelation in nature and his Reformed faith in the divinely inspired Scriptures. Perhaps he will be able to instill among us a renewed, a heightened, because more intelligent, admiration for "the venerable Moses."

The Sovereignty of God

by James Daane

THIS is the first in a series of articles on the sovereignty of God. Since God's revelation of Himself is a revelation of Jesus Christ as *Lord*, the question to be discussed is not *whether* God is sovereign. The question concerns the *nature* of divine sovereignty. The special concern of this article is to consider divine sovereignty defined as divine causality.

In the circles in which the *Reformed Journal* is read, the sovereignty of God is commonly accepted and professed. The value of this, however, depends upon what the nature of sovereignty is conceived to be. The Mohammedans, too, insist on the sovereignty of God. Yet their conception of the nature of divine sovereignty makes their doctrine of sovereignty something less than Christian. There is a non-Christian as well as a Christian conception of divine sovereignty.

Most readers of this journal recall that the denial of common grace within the Christian Reformed churches some thirty-five years ago was based upon a certain conception of the sovereignty of God. It was urged that the nature of divine sovereignty is such that there can be no common grace or favor of God to all men. It is clear, then, that the proposition "God is sovereign" comes with no built-in guarantee that it is Christian truth. The nature of divine sovereignty may be so defined that the proposition carries a content wholly foreign to Biblical thought.

It is common to define sovereignty in terms of causality. The truth that God is sovereign is said to mean that God is the *cause* of everything that is, and the cause of everything that happens.

THE identification of divine sovereignty with divine causality has frequently been made. It has frequently been made when Ephesians 1:11 was quoted to prove divine sovereignty. The statement that God "worketh all things after the counsel of his will" has frequently been adduced as proof that God is the *cause* of everything. Yet the statement that God *worketh* all things after the counsel of His will is not identical with the statement that God is the *cause* of all things.

Where the absolute and all-comprehensive sovereignty of God is defined in terms of causality, there God becomes equally, and in the same sense (else sovereignty in this view would be less than absolute and all-comprehensive) the cause of each and every fact, and each and every fact in turn becomes, equally, an actualization and expression of the counsel of the divine will.

In Ephesians 1:11 Paul does not, however, define God's sovereignty as meaning that God causes all things. For this reason he does not teach that each and every fact is an actualization and expression of the counsel of God's will. Rather, he teaches that the sovereignty of God is that operation of God upon each and every fact which bends, controls, and directs each and every fact to the *attainment* of the counsel of His will. It is not that all things are the counsel of His will, and it is not that God causes all things. Rather, God sovereignly works through and upon all things in such fashion that the end or goal of the counsel of His will is through the processes of history actualized and attained. The view that makes God as sovereign the cause of each and every thing, and (hence) regards each and every thing as an actualization and revelation of the will of God's counsel, is wholly static, with no eye for the significance of the historical process. But Paul's view is dynamic and truly historical. The counsel of the divine will, according to Paul, is fully actualized *at the end* by the God "who worketh all things after the counsel of his will *to the end that* . . ." (Eph. 1:11, 12).

Paul's view of God's sovereignty over all things is, therefore, not at all indicated by that view of sovereignty which makes God the *cause* of all things. It may be helpful to put the matter this way: Whereas Paul's view of the nature of the divine sovereign operation upon all things moves toward the end, or goal, of that process in which the counsel of God's will is progressively attained, the view that defines divine sovereignty in terms of divine causation points to the beginning of God's sovereign operation — since "cause" is in its very nature that which is *first* — and never gets beyond the beginning since it defines divine sovereignty exclusively as divine causation.

THE identification of divine sovereignty with divine causality occurs in the thought of Professor C. Van Til. It occurs in his contention that God as He-is-in-Himself, i.e., God as self-contained, related to Himself and to nothing else, is the explanation and the meaning of every fact, including sin, because He is, as sovereign, the *cause* of all things. Here all meaning rests on the identification of divine sovereignty with divine causality.

Recently the same identification appeared in the writings of Rev. John Stek (see *The Banner*, Dec. 18, 1959). Speaking on behalf of Van Til's contention that in Reformed thought God must be re-

garded as the cause of sin, Stek was misled into the error of attempting to show that the Heidelberg Catechism, the Canons of Dort, and the Belgic Confession, all teach that God as sovereign is the cause of sin. This was a peculiar error inasmuch as the Canons explicitly state that God is "in no wise" the cause of any sin, and also explicitly state that the cause lies in man himself.

In various writings Van Til has spelled out the meaning of divine sovereignty in terms of ultimate and secondary causation. God, he says, is the ultimate cause of all things, and man the secondary or approximate cause.

In his *Common Grace* Van Til develops this pattern of ultimate and secondary causation against Calvin's opponent Pighius, who denied ultimate causes in the interest of secondary causes. Van Til also proposes this understanding of sovereignty as a corrective of the tendency in the theology of Herman Hoeksema to lose the validity of secondary causes and thus the significance of the historical process.

Let us see whether the attempt to define God's sovereignty in terms of causality, as refined by Van Til's distinction between ultimate and secondary causation, is really successful. Does it help us to a clearer understanding of this important truth about God? Does it lead to a more effective defense of the gospel of God's sovereign grace? Does the attempt to understand divine sovereignty in terms of a divine and human causation throw light on the old problem of divine sovereignty and human responsibility? Does it commend acceptance of Van Til's assertion that God as the ultimate cause of sin is a truth which belongs to the very heart of Reformed theology?

As was said, the Canons of Dort explicitly, and in the plainest language possible, teach that God is "in no wise" the cause of any sin, and that the cause of unbelief and of all other sins is in man. In the attempt to show that Van Til's assertion that God is the ultimate cause of sin is the teaching of the Reformed Confessions and of all prominent Reformed theologians, Stek made a quite mistaken appeal to "mystery" and "the apparently contradictory." He admitted, for example, that the Canons do teach that God is in no wise the cause of sin and that the cause lies in man himself. But he contended that the Canons also teach that God is in some sense the cause of sin, in the sense, namely, that He is the ultimate cause. And he reminded any who would object to this that God must appear to our mere human finite minds as "mystery" and His truth, as divine, must necessarily appear to us as "apparently contradictory."

Of course, the possibility exists that in his theological reflection Van Til has advanced beyond the Canons and has placed them in need of revision. The Canons are not, necessarily, Reformed theology's final word. But whether Van Til has in fact placed them in need of revision requires careful appraisal.

IN his book *Common Grace* Van Til urges, particularly against Pighius, that secondary causes are real and significant because God as ultimate cause stands behind them. To those who think this position contradictory and involved in the dilemma of the "full-bucket," Van Till declares: "We shall meet this charge of contradiction by asserting that we are the true defenders of the meaning of second causes. History has meaning just because God's counsel is back of it. Sin can be given as the reason for man's destruction just because men were 'fitted for destruction,' and faith can be given as a reason for man's final glory just because believers were 'afore prepared unto glory'" (p. 67).

In a subsequent article consideration will be given to this idea of sovereignty as related to man's sin and final destruction. Here consideration will be limited to the manner in which it is said to be related to man's faith and entrance into final glory.

The above quoted statement, found at the conclusion of a long discussion of this matter, indicates that Van Til is attempting to show that divine sovereignty imparts to man's sin and faith the character of real and meaningful secondary causes. Man's faith is a real and significant cause, because behind it stands God the ultimate cause of faith.

What then, we ask, is this meaning and significance of faith as a secondary cause? What does faith in a secondary fashion accomplish? What does it effect and bring about? Van Til's answer is clear and plain. Faith explains and accounts for the believer's entrance into final glory. Faith is meaningful because it is a secondary cause of man's salvation. Man's own act of faith, while not the ultimate, is nevertheless a real cause, accounting for, and effecting, his entrance into final glory.

It hardly needs to be urged that faith is not such a cause, one which in any sense effects a man's final salvation. Reformed theology has long insisted — indeed, the idea is almost elementary knowledge — that faith is a *means* but *in no sense a cause* of man's salvation. Man is saved *through* believing, but not *because* he believes. If the latter were true, good works as something *meritorious* would return into the very citadel of faith and grace. In Question 61 the Heidelberg Catechism belabors itself to warn us of this danger and keep us from it. If faith is in any sense a cause of man's salvation, then faith has not only returned as a work of merit, but the very idea of human merit has been theologically accounted for and justified. If the believer's action of faith *is in any sense* the cause of

his entrance into final glory, the believer is in the same sense the author of his own salvation. The causation of salvation is thus shared by God and man. God is the ultimate cause, but man is a real and significant secondary cause of salvation.

This is hardly the way to answer Pighius, who denied divine sovereignty and ultimate divine causation because he wanted man to be a significant agent of causation. Rather, this is a surrender to him, for when God *and man* are both the cause of man's salvation — God in the ultimate and man in the secondary sense — then man after all shares in what from a truly Reformed and Biblical view belongs to God alone as the sovereign and only cause of man's redemption. Pighius would quite agree with Van Til's definition of God's sovereignty in terms of secondary human causation.

REFORMED theology has always refused to define divine sovereignty in terms of mere causation. For this reason it has always refused to regard God as in any sense the cause of sin, and it has explicitly rejected the idea. And quite in harmony with Biblical and Reformation thought, it has always insisted that the cause of our salvation lies in God, and in God *alone*. For this reason it has defined sovereignty in reference to grace, and not in terms of mere causality. Reformed theology has recognized that if that divine sovereignty which accounts for the all-inclusive plan of God must account for all things within this plan in terms of mere causality, then grace itself must be thus accounted for. And while Reformed theology has known that grace has its source in God alone, in God the *Father*, in God the *Author*, it has at the same time known that it would be a transgression of Christian propriety to account for the grace by which we are saved in terms of something else. Reformed theology whole-heartedly admits that the cause of our salvation is divine grace, and grace alone (and not faith in any sense!); at the same time it avoids the error of trying to find a cause for grace. The cause of man's salvation is grace *alone*, not something else that is other than, and lies behind, grace.

Salvation is of Jehovah, not in an ultimate, as distinct from a secondary, sense, but in that ultimate sense which allows none other.

If the believer's faith were a significant secondary cause of his entrance into final glory, he could then in glory say truthfully and significantly that God is the ultimate cause but his own faith a significant secondary cause of his presence in glory. This the Bible does not allow. God in His sovereignty has so arranged the method of redemption that they who would glory will have to glory in the Lord.

A view of divine sovereignty that makes God in some sense, indeed in the ultimate sense, the cause of sin, and the believer in any sense (secondary, or less) the cause of his salvation is, on both scores, a wholly unacceptable view.

Although Van Til obviously has no objection to making God a cause of sin, for he insists upon it, I do not believe that he desires a theology that makes man a cause of his own salvation. I am sure he does not. Yet he will not be able to avoid it as long as he explains all things contained in the all-inclusive plan of God in terms of a sovereignty reduced first to mere causality, and then refined in terms of ultimate and secondary causation. The very methodology is wrong. Neither creation nor redemption (both contained in God's all-inclusive plan) can, to say nothing more, be defined in terms of any secondary human causation. Yet the error of making man a meaningful and secondary cause of his own creation and of his own redemption is of a kind with the error that makes man's act of faith a significant secondary cause of his entrance into final glory.

The basic error in this view is not merely that of reducing divine sovereignty to divine causation; the basic error is that of defining God's sovereignty in terms of divine *and* human causation, in terms of God *and* man. This very method necessitates a final capitulation to Pighius, and to the various forms of Arminianism.

THE next in this series of articles will consider the assertion that "Sin can be given as the reason for man's destruction just because men were 'fitted for destruction'. . . ."

The Frontiers of Modern Poetry

by Henry ten Hoor

WHEN THIS TOPIC was first assigned to me, it was defined as "space-age poetry." So I kept my eye on the proper periodicals to see what had happened to poetry since Sputnik. Apparently nothing had happened. Neither the subject-matter nor the metaphor of recent poetry has reflected the impact of that event. I was able to find only one effect of it in verse, one of Sec's little squibs which appeared in *The Reporter* of May 28, 1959. The last stanza goes:

> *Perhaps the poet now is astronaut,*
> *For nothing lesser would prepare to go*
> *Beyond the limits of the known and taught*
> *Simply to learn what truth there is to know.*

Since the space age has not contributed anything especially characteristic and has not established the poetic frontier, it becomes necessary to take a somewhat broader look at recent poetry and its expression of the contemporary world. Now the mention of modern poetry elicits a fairly standard response, and one that is not usually enthusiastic. The typical response to contemporary drama is that it deals with important social and psychological problems, although it may over-emphasize psychiatric character and the libidinous detail of peculiar behavior. Modern fiction is typically thought of as the best and most rapidly developing vehicle for the portrayal of twentieth-century problems. But mention modern poetry, and whoever is still listening gets a vision of a cat on a hot tin roof yowling in distinct but unidentifiable anguish. Modern poetry, it is said, is unintelligible and difficult; no one in his right mind can find out what it means; the poet obscures rather than clarifies.

This typical reaction needs closer inspection. To say that anyone's expression is unintelligible is to say that he doesn't know what he is talking about. To say that it is difficult means that the audience must work hard to find the meaning. There is a great difference. It is no doubt true that some modern poets have written unintelligible verse, but so has Longfellow, and one can find some in the hymnbooks. Unintelligibility is not a contemporary sin only. There is, of course, no gainsaying that much of contemporary poetry is difficult. But it seems to me that this cannot be an accusation, although it may be an honest description. Today's poet lives in the same complicated world with today's physicist, biologist, and theologian. No one thinks of accusing modern physics of being difficult or contemporary biology of being complex. This is construed as evidence of progress. Yet it seems that the poet, who is engaged in the synthesis of experience, and not concerned with a mere analysis of only one aspect of life, must by some strange alchemy remain pellucid, simple, and comfortable, and continue to speak in the same cliché as the village blacksmith.

This is an unreasonable expectation. It develops, most certainly, from a lack of understanding of the function of the poet today. We should be clear about the problem of the modern poet. He is faced with a complex and shattered world, made so partly by the discoveries and applications of science; a world devoid of meaning or values, without a means of "seeing life whole." The old myths have been destroyed — myths being those images by which we grasp the most basic spiritual assumptions about the nature of life — and have been replaced not by newer myths but only by the unassociated facts of scientific investigation. Thus the relation of man to the external world in which he lives and to the tradition out of which he comes has been disrupted, making it difficult, if not impossible, to find spiritual order and leaving him stranded in a world empty of significant truths and relationships. To T. S. Eliot it is a "rat's alley/Where dead men lost their bones."

It is of this dissociated world that the poet wishes to make a unity. He wishes to find in it a myth that gives significance to man's existence, efforts and relationships. This does not mean that like Matthew Arnold he will scuttle religion and spiritual reality in favor of scientific fact. It means that he tries to achieve and express a vision of spiritual order. It is this search that has brought some contemporary poets, like Eliot, for instance, back into the church or, failing a conversion, has made of them stern moralists. The attempt to find the relevance of history and previous art has also resulted from the search for a value-giving myth. Consequently, much modern poetry alludes to bygone art and literature. It is attempting to establish a continuum of idea, experience, and value — to establish a spiritual and intellectual environment in which modern man may orient himself.

Contemporary poetry, then, looks like a serious affair. Those who have written and are writing the best of it are certainly not irresponsible dilettantes but mature thinkers and skillful craftsmen. And this is good, for one cannot find his way to clarity in this modern world through the eye of the poet "in a fine frenzy rolling"; the discovery of spiritual

and intellectual meaning demands steadier vision and a less romantic enthusiasm. And certainly it requires new methods and techniques. The complexity and strangeness of our modern world cannot be adequately caught in the form and metaphor adapted to a simpler age. The form and techniques of the contemporary poem must combine to communicate the texture of today's experience.

It may be well, then, to see, by demonstration, how contemporary poetry has reacted to the contemporary world and thus to become aware of the frontier on which the modern poet is working. Let us look at a few samples to illustrate the outstanding characteristics.

IN THE FIRST PLACE, it is not primarily the subject-matter of recent poetry that makes it different and difficult. There was, of course, a time when a certain body of materials was accepted as being by its very nature poetic. Everyone came to know that a virtuous daughter singing in a village choir, or a solitary reaper was the stuff that poems were made of. But when poetry by that very standardization was incapacitated for saying anything significant about a more complex world, the newer poets began to look at other materials (though not necessarily more exciting or exotic ones) from a new point of view. Peter Davison, in commenting on the new poetry in a recent issue of *Atlantic* says:

> The particular feelings that are of most value to the younger poet are those which he cannot, in a public way, share and which depend on the most personal kind of response: love or the destruction of love, loneliness in the face of the ultimate facts of birth and death and the shape of the world, amazement in the face of an archetypal myth seen anew, reverence for the simple facts of nature, anguish or contentment with the daily round of life, fascination with the way poems are made and with how they differ from life itself, horror at the world man has made for himself.

Perhaps the only things here that are different from typical poetic subject-matter are the "concern with the shape of the world," the re-vision of the old myth, and the interest in the creative process. But most of it is the same as that found in what we like to think of as typical poems. To illustrate, let us compare Wordworth's poem, "Strange Fits of Passion Have I Known" with William Carlos Williams' "Complaint." These are both poems of a short journey, and each has a woman at the end of it. In the Wordsworth poem the woman is the speaker's sweetheart. As the lover rides to see her on a moon-lit evening, he is suddenly possessed by the idea that his Lucy may be dead. The sudden intuition of potential tragedy, the thrill which the speaker of the poem experiences, remains pretty much a record of a strange fit of passion. It makes no very significant comment on the human condition, and although there are many good things that could be said of the poem, it remains a somewhat dubious pleasure recollected in tranquillity, a romantic curiosity.

But notice the Williams poem. Here is the brief story of a doctor called out on a raw winter's night. Again the journey has a woman at the end of it, in this case a large, ugly woman giving birth to her tenth child. There is not much the doctor can do for his patient, but he tries to make her comfortable. The complaint, of course, is not that he is disturbed to do an unpleasant task on an unpleasant night, but that what should be an occasion of joy is one of squalor and pain. His complaint is that ironically joy is turned to sorrow, beauty to ugliness, love to indifference; that the goodness in life is corroded and destroyed; and what should be the peaks of human exhilaration become the rat's alleys of agony; and, furthermore, that fellow creatures are helpless to comfort one another or to communicate with each other. Professional help is not most important to the sufferer in the poem: she needs human, personal help, and this no one is able or willing to give. The doctor's helplessness is symbolized by the futile gesture of picking the hair from his patient's eyes. Where Wordsworth portrays a lighted world with the possibility of darkness, Williams gives us a dark world in which light is an illusion. Where Wordsworth emphasizes the *possible* separation of people who are together, Williams points out the separation of people who cannot get together, lovers alienated, strangers helpless.

What becomes apparent is that a modern poem is not necessarily one on a new or unusual subject, but that the treatment is likely to reveal a greater significance, a franker admission by the poet of his own involvement in a universal problem.

Or there is a longer piece such as Louis MacNeice's "These Days Are Misty" from his "Autumn Journal." Here the subject is political, and such subjects are certainly not new to poetry. There is, for instance, that sonnet by Milton which begins, "Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered Saints . . ." and has to do with a piece of political butchery perpetrated by the Duke of Savoy on a group of Italian Protestants. Milton roars in anger against this savagery, as any civilized and Christian person would, then sings his dirge. But there the poem stops; there is no further reflection. MacNeice deals with a similar, though less melodramatic, piece of political treachery resulting from the Munich crisis of 1938. He comments on its political results, on its ethical implications, and inquires into the personal guilt of the people represented in the international negotiations.

. . . And we hardly have the heart to meddle
Any more with personal ethics or public calls;
People have not recovered from the crisis,
Their faces are far away, the tone of the words
Belies their thesis. . . .

His preoccupation is not only with public treachery but with private dishonesty and lack of interest, with the breakdown of personal integrity and dissipated moral energy. He, like Williams, finds a more personal meaning in the commonplace subject he has chosen.

I believe that this characteristic of modern poetry —the closer relation of the poet to the implication of his poem — often alienates the reader. He feels that this awareness of involvement, or guilt at the lack of it, is unhealthy and unwholesome, something that should not be admitted in public; or that the relation between the poet and the problem is strained, that, like Hamlet, he thinks too precisely on the event, and thus is an unsuitable person to appeal to for the solution of problems.

BUT MOST OF THE unfavorable reaction to contemporary poetry results from the techniques and devices it employs. I have said before that part of the contemporary poet's preoccupation is with finding his relation to the tradition out of which he comes. This objective is reflected in his technique. He takes all of art, history, and literature as part of his tradition and works with it and in it, trying to see its relevance for his generation, revisioning the old myth into new significance. Two examples will illustrate. Even upon a cursory reading of Auden's "Musee des Beaux Arts" one becomes immediately aware that to understand what Auden is trying to say it is necessary to know Brueghel's "Icarus." The allusion is the key to understanding the poem. If one does not grasp the allusion he misses the poignancy of Auden's statement that suffering has no apparent purpose, although it is inescapable and very likely squalid. Besides this, the choice of allusion is significant because it represents a refusal to accept either of the traditional views of the nature of suffering. Classically, suffering was thought to bring humility and wisdom in the face of unmitigable fate. For the Elizabethans suffering was evidence of a moral order in the universe, bent on good, extirpating evil, and bringing to ripeness those who were its victims. But for Brueghel, and thus for Auden, it is without significance, purpose, or dignity; it develops neither manliness nor divinity. Auden is choosing the tradition, forging a myth, revisioning an old myth, trying to orient himself in an apparently purposeless world. And this difficult job he manages by an allusion to a work of art. He expects his reader to know it and what it stands for. This makes for hard reading; but when the difficulty is overcome, the statement is eminently clear.

T. S. Eliot is famous for using this technique. A good example is "A Game of Chess" from "The Wasteland." In this selection the poet is drawing a contrast between the unnerved modern person and the people of "personality" and resourcefulness of an earlier time. He manages this contrast by the same device that Auden uses, only Eliot uses it more subtly. If one is to catch the contrast he must recognize that the opening lines of this poem are a parody on Shakespeare's description of Cleopatra as Antony first saw her, surrounded by exotic beauty on her barge of gold. The opening of the poem suggests wealth, culture, leisure, beauty, but also a certain phoniness. The woman in the poem has no energy, no purpose, is "nervous," suffers from ennui — quite a contrast to Cleopatra, who is usually remembered as a woman of considerable purpose, energy, and activity. If the reader misses this allusion, he also misses the example which Eliot is providing to demonstrate the wasteland that contemporary society and culture have become: purposeless, nerveless, neurotic. The presupposition of literary and classical knowledge on the part of the reader is a stringent one; the lack of this knowledge bids fair to destroy the reader's interest in and his understanding of the poem.

The deep sensitivity to the meaninglessness of modern life has resulted in yet another poetic device which often makes contemporary poems difficult. This is the use of wit. It occurs in many forms: irony, an assumed formality, intellectualism, humor, the selection of unusual subject-matter. Wit is a wall, as Robert Frost said, behind which the poet can protect himself against complete disillusionment with a mythless world in which there is no substantial purpose. It is an unexpected attitude to the reader of typical poetry and thus often causes him to shy away. A fair example is John Crowe Ransom's "Janet Waking." The wit here resides in the choice of a most ordinary and almost ludicrous subject to convey a most serious idea: the realization of the fact of death. This is the kind of subject which at one time was exploited under a title such as "Thanatopsis," which sounds properly imposing. But to illustrate the mystery of mortality with a bee-stung barnyard hen is next to comic. To deal with it in terms such as "transmogrifying" and in language both colloqial and liturgical seems absurd. All the witty devices, however, converge to show Janet's complete ignorance of the fact of death and its very immediate presence. All the extremes in the poem serve to illustrate this incongruity. The intellectual play with the idea helps to stave off an emotional surrender to the futility of life. The point is that such a witty approach to such a

entimental subject is unexpected and shocking, nd the reader, rather than solve the secret of the echnique, returns to familiar and typical poems.

Another technique contributes to the difficulty of ontemporary poetry. Again it is a technique hich grows out of a recognition of the complexity f modern knowledge. This is the device of dis-ontinuous statement. The poet leaves gaps in is poem and the reader must jump them or give p the reading. That this is intentional need not e said. The poet is being discontinuous because t suits his purpose, and his purpose is usually sychological realism. The mind works discon-inuously, and the modern poet has, as Louise Bogan ays, "moved . . . into larger countries of the mind." he mind does not proceed naturally by syllogism; t hops from one idea or image to another. Re-member how this occurs in T. S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." The poem begins abruptly with the "I" speaking to the "you." There is no hint who these pronouns mean. This will become evident as the poem proceeds. Then sudden-ly, after a short argument by the "I," comes the first statement of a recurring refrain: "In the room the women come and go/Talking of Michelangelo." The reader stops to ponder the connection. Shortly, the "I" alludes to the lonely men in shirt sleeves, and the reader wonders why they have a significance for the poem. Then, in what seems to be a burst of disgust, the "I" says he "should have been a pair of ragged claws/Scuttling across the floors of silent seas." There is no illumination in the metaphor. The reader is left to his own devices, to his own understanding of the working of the human mind and the meaning of symbols to bring meaning to the poem. The connections are omitted, the signposts are down. The reader must make a kind of effort not demanded by a more typical poem, and the effort is often too great. But when the connections are established, the poem reveals a picture of personality at odds with itself, refusing to reveal its pride and self-love to others — and a picture of a generation incapable of significant action.

IT IS NECESSARY to say one or two things about the rime and meter of recent poetry. Regularity of these devices is, of course, typical of earlier, say Victorian, poetry. They also occur in much recent poetry. But there has been a great deal of experimentation with them which has resulted in greater flexibility and subtlety of verse. Take an Auden stanza as an example:

That night when joy began
Our narrowest veins to flush,
We waited for the flash
Of morning's levelled gun.

The riming words may miss the ear of the traditional reader entirely. *Began* and *gun* do not rime as expected; neither do *flash* and *flush.* But there is a reason. The poet is describing the tentative recognition of the subtle beginnings of love. The subtlety of the rime illustrates and reinforces the elusiveness of the experience being described. *Began* and *gun* rime on the consonants as do *flash* and *flush; began* and *flash* rime on the vowels as do *gun* and *flush.* So you have all the riming words bound together. This is really much more complicated than riming *star* and *bar.* But in this instance to use perfect rime would do violence to the tentativeness with which the discovery of love is being made.

Much the same can be said of the use of meter. Marianne Moore, for instance, frequently writes poems that seem to have no metrical form whatsoever. Notice a typical stanza from her poem called "The Steeple-jack":

Durer would have seen a reason for living
in a town like this, with eight stranded whales
to look at; with the sweet sea air coming into your house
on a fine day, from water etched
with waves as formal as the scales
on a fish.

This kind of stanza has no necessary form for the traditional reader. There is no discernible rhythm, certainly no rime, and to all appearances, no discipline. On closer inspection, however, it develops that the poem is working on a different principle, not that of metrical feet, but that of number of syllables per line. There are seven stanzas in the poem, all of which follow the pattern of the first stanza faithfully. The form is strange but the discipline is there, a discipline more subtle and demanding than that of a traditional poem. But the unwary reader may dismiss the poem as slovenly and formless.

Finally, a short note on the Beat poets. There is a temptation to think that these are the frontiersmen of today's poetry, and in a sense they are. They are experimenters — with subject-matter, with form, with device — but so is every good poet. And it is true that Ginsberg's "Howl" was, as Stanley Kunitz says in a recent issue of *Harper's* magazine, a "rhetorical blockbuster." Yet the function of the true poet is not so much to confess himself loudly in public as to express feeling and transmit understanding. The preoccupation of the Beat poets has been more with feeling, with a somewhat uncontrolled self-pity, than with the transmission of understanding.

IT IS APPARENT, then, that the poet is not an astronaut. His concern is not with interplanetary space. The poet's frontier is inner space where he attempts to plot the dimensions of reality and truth. It has

always been so for the poet. He wishes to get *at* the truth rather than *to* the stars. What the frontiersman of today's poetry has constructed on his frontier may have a new shape, strange lines, and sometimes a disconcerting sound, for today's frontier of inner space must have its own poetic rocketry. Today's poetry may be less popular than that of an earlier generation, just as rockets an space suits are less so than the Ford and the gre flannel. But, by the same token, today's poetry i more knowledgeable and permits a greater range As the rocket will help to resolve the mysteries o interplanetary space, so today's poetry can give u a clearer understanding of the space within.

The Gospel of Genesis

by Hugh A. Koops

THE STORY OF CREATION is marked by many of the features that mark the story of re-creation. Both creation and salvation carry the imprint of divine origin. They are the work of the same God, and reveal the same divine methods. But frequently the similarities between creation and re-creation are overlooked. For we turn to the first chapters of Genesis to see the arrangement of the world or the age of man. We look for that which is not to be found, and overlook that which is to be found, the grace of God. Let us then look at the first chapters of Genesis, realizing that this is God's story. We may be amazed at the Gospel we shall find there. We may be amazed at the "foolishness" of God, the same "foolishness" we find later at Bethlehem and at Calvary. There are surprises in the Book of Genesis, the surprises of the Gospel.

There are three movements, three themes, that we cannot avoid as we read through the first two chapters of Genesis. As we listen to these themes we recall the familiar harmony. Such melody we have heard before. Each of these themes prepares us for the coming of God in Jesus Christ. The movements of Genesis correspond to the movements of the Gospel in Jesus Christ.

THE FIRST OF THESE movements is the movement toward the temporal sphere. It is the movement from eternity towards time. Frequently when we think of God's activity, we think of something taking place in eternity. God's actions take place in eternity, and man's actions take place in time. Because the acts of God take place in eternity, we tend to obscure the temporal element in His activities. His actions do not take time, we suppose. They cut through time, are never impeded by time. They are instantaneous, like the twinkling of an eye and the sound of a trumpet. When God works His miracles He accomplishes in no time what nature and man accomplish in much time.

For instance, election, regeneration, and justification are acts of God. Thus we easily conclude that they take place in eternity. That is, they take plac instantaneously. They are acts of God, and do no use up time. This is what we commonly suppos But this is not the whole story. We see the *ord salutis,* however our theologians arrange it, callin for time. Besides election, regeneration, and justif cation there are also conversion, repentance, faitl and sanctification. Differing schools of though intermesh the acts of God and the acts of man, c the acts of eternity and the acts of time, in varyin fashion. It is difficult to bring time and eternit together. But the greatest danger of all is tha we suppose, because the sphere of the eternal be longs to God, that the temporal belongs to ma alone. To recognize the Gospel of Creation, an much more the Gospel of the Incarnation, we mus give God a place within the temporal, within th historical. It may be difficult for us to accept a act of God that devours time. Yet this is the ac justment we must make if we are to understan the creation of the world, or the "foolishness" c the cross.

It was Augustine who reminded us long ago tha God did not create *in* time, but *with* time. I accepting this statement, however, Christians hav often taken only the negative half of the statemen and have forgotten the positive affirmation c Augustine. Christians have concluded that, becaus God did not create *in* time, that He must hav created *before* time. They set the clock of histor with the last day of creation. According to th view, time begins when God rests. God's creativ activities do not take place *in* time. Small wonde Deism has constantly plagued Christianity. Th God of the Deist rests throughout time.

But let us note Augustine's affirmation as we as his negation. God created *with* time. Creatio and time are contemporaneous. Time begins wit the first verse of the first chapter of Genesis, no the first verse of the second chapter. The clock c history must be set "in the beginning." Time goe hand in hand with creation throughout the Gosp

of Genesis. For some reason, known only to Him, God likes to work with a schedule.

What pains God takes to display His love for time! He creates time, and He records time. "Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years" (Gen. 1:14). When God creates the world He does *not* do so in an instant. The account in Genesis does not depend upon rapidity. God does not obscure the passage of time, as does the magician with his rambling chatter. God highlights the passing days. He distributes His creative powers throughout time. Each incident is recorded on the calendar of creation. His powers are displayed with beginnings and endings; "there was an evening, and a morning," day after day.

And finally God rests. He hallows time by selecting a "day" for His enjoyment. He runs the risk of being accused of tiredness or laziness in order to let us know that He, the eternal God, enjoys time. God moves, in seven days, from the realm of the eternal to rest in the realm of the temporal. This is the first theme in the Gospel of Genesis, the movement from eternity to time.

BUT THERE ARE OTHER movements in this story. Let us now consider the movement in method, the movement from creating to manufacturing, the movement from calling into being towards calling for the acceptance of creative responsibilities by creation itself.

As the creation story proceeds, we observe a change in the method used by God. Whereas at first He had made something *ex nihilo* He soon begins to make use of what is already present in creating new forms of existence. As there is a movement from eternity to time, so there is a movement from *creating* towards *making*, a movement from primary creation towards secondary creation.

God seems to create only when there is nothing at hand as raw materials for making. He creates, but only when the creative powers He has given to creation are exhausted. When His handiwork lacks life, He creates animal life (Gen. 1:21), and later He creates man (1:27). But otherwise we find the story speaking of creating only in introduction (1:1), or in summary (2:3, 4). More often He makes (1:7, 16, 25), or divides (1:7), or gathers (1:9), or sets (1:17), or forms (2:7, 19). And when He rests it is not only because of what He has created, but also because of what He has made (2:4).

Continually in the first chapters of Genesis we hear God speaking to what He has made, calling for the co-operation of creation in the completion of His work. "Let the earth put forth grass, herbs yielding seed, and fruit-trees bearing fruit after their kind, wherein is the seed thereof" (1:11). He makes provision for the creating powers of plant life by implanting seeds with the fruit. He speaks to the waters: "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures" (1:20). God blesses these creatures, saying to them: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth" (1:22). God is no officious committee chairman, afraid to delegate responsibilities to others, lest the glory be not His. He constantly assigns tasks to His handiwork. "Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind" (1:24). All this He calls creating, in spite of all the assistance He receives from that to which He has given the power to assist Him.

Most interesting and enlightening is the readiness of God to wait upon creation itself. Before the plants spring forth there must be both moisture and cultivation. So God follows the rules of the world He has created. "And no plant of the field was yet in the earth, and no herb of the field had yet sprung up: for Jehovah God had not caused it to rain upon the earth: and there was not a man to till the ground" (2:5). Therefore God waters the ground (2:6), and forms man to care for it (2:7). Then God plants a garden, places man in the garden, and makes the trees to grow (2:8, 9). It seems strange to us that God should have to bother with irrigation, like later Mesopotamian farmers, before He sets out His garden. And must God wait with the planting of His garden until He has formed man to cultivate it? But God seems less ashamed than we to stand in line. Our impatience does not befit Him. He is willing to wait upon the natural processes of His world. He sets out no plants because it has not rained.

Nowhere is God's use of creation in creating more evident than it is in the creation of man. Speaking to the earth, the sea, the plants, and the animals, God calls them to develop the potentials inherent in them through creation. But at the creation of man God very clearly reveals His desires to use what He has already made. "God formed man out of the dust of the ground" (2:7). And He would find a help-meet for Adam. How impressed we would be by the divine command, "Let there be woman." But it does not embarrass God to lull Adam to sleep that He may take a rib, make a woman, wake up Adam, and present him a wife. Yes, the God who creates the host of heaven by the breath of His mouth brings life to man by breathing into nostrils of dust.

WE HAVE OBSERVED two of the themes in the first two chapters of Genesis. There is a third. Besides the movement from eternity towards time, and the movement from creating towards making, there is the movement from chaos towards cosmos, the movement from disorder towards direction. And

possibly nowhere is the Gospel as clearly seen in Genesis as it is here.

We are introduced to chaos already in the second verse of the account. "And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (1:2). We observe that this is not intended primarily to be a picture of the physical world at that time. It is not a statement of physical significance as much as it is a statement of spiritual significance. It makes little difference what the world looked like before anyone was present to see the world. But it makes a lot of difference to the Christian to know God's relation to the world, and to Himself. And this verse tells us that though the world is in God's hand, there is no apparent order, no obvious arrangement. The world is waste of purpose, void of intent.

Just as obvious from this verse is the fact that the world is not intended to remain without purpose, to remain waste and void. For brooding upon the face of the waters is the Spirit of God. As the hen broods over her nest, so the Spirit of God broods over the face of the waters, generating life. This waste and void is warmed by the presence of the Spirit of life. Soon life shall burst forth, with all the bustle of the hatchery.

But what makes this waste and void? What can change the picture from disorder to direction? How is God to arrange the awry?

The waste is that which cannot support life, especially human life. The waste is uninhabited (cf. Job 6:18, Isa. 24:10). But Jehovah did not create the world to remain a waste, to abide without purpose; He formed it to be inhabited (Isa. 45:18). The world of waste and void is the world without man (cf. Isa. 34:11, 12; Jer. 4:23-26).

This, then, is the significance of the waste and void of Genesis. The world is yet uninhabited. But God gives direction to this disorder, converts the chaos into cosmos by the gift of life, especially human life. The wilderness shall blossom as a rose. Moses sings a song to describe the glory of the God who converts the wilderness into a Garden of Eden, who leads His people through the wilderness of Sinai to a land flowing with milk and honey, through His creating and recreating love for man.

> For Jehovah's portion is his people:
> Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.
> He found him in a desert land,
> And in the waste howling wilderness
> He compassed him about, he cared for him,
> And kept him as the apple of his eye (Deut. 32:9, 10).

The third movement, from chaos to cosmos, is completed as God gives to man the keys of creation. To man He entrusts the world He has made. God arranges His creation under the man He has created in His image, after His likeness. "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Gen. 1:28).

HERE IS THE GOSPEL of Genesis. Here is the "foolishness" of God. We would create God in our image, imagining the God who stands aloof from time; but we find a God who spreads His work, even His creative work, through time. We have a God who shows no need for help in creating; we

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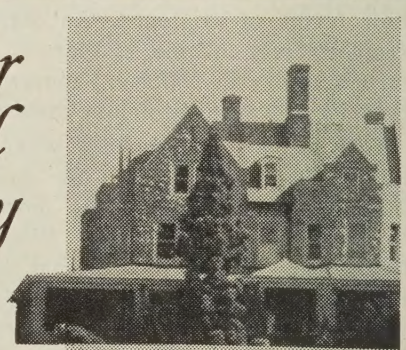

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also have a God who uses all there is as He fills out His universe. We have a God who maintains dominion over His handiwork; we also have a God whose confidence in His own sovereignty allows the giving of dominion to a creature. We have a God who tolerates no threats to His transcendence; we also have a God who will not have us deny His immanence.

Until we recognize both sides of the story of creation we shall find it difficult to accept the story or re-creation. We must see the Gospel throughout the Bible. Of course, between creation and re-creation there is the fall. And we must take the fall seriously. We must not be tempted by the common modern over-simplification, *à la* Tillich, which identifies creatureliness with sin. Should this be done, we must succumb to the despair of existentialism and the "beat generation." For they despair of humanity, and they cannot escape their humanity. The Christian despairs of sin, and sin can be escaped, through Jesus Christ. The Christian is not "beat." The fall must not be overlooked, lest redemption be impossible without escaping creatureliness. Yet we must remember that the fall only affects man. God remains the same. He is no Old Testament tyrant, nor is He a New Testament grand-daddy. He lives with time, before and after. He uses things, before and after. He loves man, before and after. He is the same, yesterday, today, and forever.

Against the back-drop of sin, of course, these features of God stand out more clearly. The movements in the music of the spheres are heard again in the song of redemption. Thus we behold these characteristics of God the more clearly in Jesus Christ. In Jesus Christ we see the God who waits on time. The God who waited for the rain now waits throughout the period of a virgin's pregnancy to bring new life to man. To wait for natural process brings no blush to God. Twelve years He waits to speak within the temple. Thirty years He waits to speak unto His people. Time lags as He is brought from Caiaphas to Pilate to Herod and back. But time must wait, throughout three hours of darkness, for His eternity of forsakenness. Thus He "redeems the time."

In Jesus Christ we also see the God who uses things. He not only uses them; He dares to appear dependent upon them. He hungers, but refuses to make bread from stones. He thirsts. At birth they wrapped swaddling bands around His body to keep Him warm; when He died the gamblers stripped His garments from Him. Unconsciously these soldiers paid tribute to the man who displayed His ability to stand above a need for things. But they took a cross and nails to kill Him. They needed a spear, and blood with water, to know that He was dead.

And in Jesus Christ, above all, we see the God who loves man. As God had dirtied His fingers in the mud He had created, to form a man, so now God empties Himself into the world of sin He hated, to become a man. He submits to the requirements of humanity, such as hunger and weariness; He submits to the requirements of depravity, such as baptism and death, that He may declare the God who so loved the world.

Time, things, man himself, were stricken by the fall. Thus Jesus Christ reveals the grace of God surpassing the grace of creation. By the grace of God, in Jesus Christ we find redemption from the wicked monotony of time; we tread this "petty pace" beyond "recorded time" to God's sabbath of eternal rest. In Jesus Christ we find deliverance from the evil rule of things; we can stand in the presence of God, like Adam and Eve, naked and yet unashamed. In Jesus Christ we find salvation from the sinful dominion of man; no longer can Eve tempt us to experience the evil that we may know the good.

Too long we have abused the first two chapters of Genesis by calling the fifteenth verse of the third chapter the *Protevangelium*, the first Gospel. The message of grace appears before the fall in the world God calls "good," in spite of time, in spite of things, because of man. Let us not forget the Gospel of the glorious grace of God "in the beginning."

MAR 1960

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